

TAKE ACTION

If you are interested in learning more about trafficking in persons, I encourage you to look at the websites of those groups who testified at the Hearing or spoke at the Human Rights Conference I held in April of this year:

The Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University,

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,

International Justice Mission,

JustLaw International,

New Life Center,
Shared Hope International, and

Northwest Family Life Center.

CONGRESSMAN JOSEPH R PITTS
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M.C.

NORTH KOREA

For years, China has refused to abide by its commitments under international law by recognizing men, women, and children fleeing North Korea as refugees.

On September 29, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees moved to classify these refugees as "people of concern" under the UNHCR mandate.

North Korean refugees have suffered tremendously due to the neglect of the international community and specifically the refusal of China to abide by its treaty commitments. The Chinese have denied UNHCR access to the thousands of North Koreans hiding in China, claiming that they were not refugees. As a result many of these men, women, and children have been subjected to terrible living conditions, abuse, and painful torture.

UNHCR's decision puts long overdue pressure on the Chinese to provide the UNHCR immediate and unimpeded access to these persons - especially those who are in immediate danger of being repatriated back to North Korea where they face certain persecution.



Human Rights Report

from Congressman Joe Pitts

Sixteenth Congressional District of Pennsylvania

OCTOBER 2003

BURMA

On October 2, 2003, Congressman Gallegly, Chair of the International Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights, and I co-chaired a hearing examining the current status of human rights violations in Burma. We had a number of excellent witnesses who shared heart-wrenching stories of systematic rape, destruction of food sources and homes, forced labor, and other actions of the current ruthless military dictatorship that is involved in ethnic cleansing. In addition we heard from officials in the Bush Administration regarding U.S. policy towards Burma.

There were a number of important issues raised during the hearing including concerns about the Burmese military dictatorship buying MiG 29 airplanes from Russia, building a 10 MW nuclear reactor through a Russian program with the assistance of two Pakistani nuclear scientists, and spending billions of dollars on Chinese weapons through an arms manufacturer, Norinco, that has been sanctioned by the U.S. for assisting with the Iranian government's missile program.

In terms of humanitarian assistance, one of the key issues



On October 2, Stephen Dun of World Aid shared a report on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Burma with the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights. Here he shows a photo of two young girls who were shot by the military while working in a field.

the US needs to address is our lack of assistance to Internally Displaced People (IDPs) inside Burma. The U.S. does give assistance to groups working with refugees from Burma who are living in Thailand. Our government does not, however, give assistance to groups working to help the IDPs inside Burma. These IDPs number between 600,000 and one million and are living day by day in the jungles. Many of them lack food, access to basic medical care, and access to education. Mr. Stephen Dun of World Aid shared a report from a small organization that does get assistance to IDPs, "As we were treating IDPs in a Karen

state at a recently burned village, deeper inside Burma Aung San Suu Kyi had just been arrested and many of her supporters murdered. Ethnic or Burman, no one is safe from the terror of the dictators of Burma. We have helped to treat and pray for women who have been raped by soldiers of the Burma Army, children who were shot, parents who saw their children thrown into a fire and many others who have endured evil. They screamed for help but no one came to save them. The world

knows these things are happening. In this world actions fall into two categories: acceptable and unacceptable. Raping little girls, murdering civilians and burning villages is unacceptable. If these things are truly unacceptable what must we do as individuals and nations? Now is the time that all people must choose where they stand, with the people of Burma or with the dictators. In the face of evil we will not flee, we will act with love, with prayer and with our lives." This quote highlights the desperate circumstances in which many of these people find themselves.

Ms. Naw Musi, a young
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BURMA

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ethnic Karen woman who spent much of her life in refugee camps in Thailand, shared her testimony that "Women, in particular, are singled out as human shields and mine sweepers during their tenure as forced laborers, as the regime's army, the *Tatmadaw*, believe they are less likely to draw enemy fire, thus treating them as if they are expendable. Furthermore, women conscripted as forced laborers are sometimes required to perform twenty-four-hour guard duty, since they are they are deemed unfit for any other work. These women, as many other women engaged in forced labor, are often subject to

sexual abuse including systematic rape at the hands of the soldiers. The Burmese regime has destroyed tens of thousands of villages deliberately in areas that were home to members of ethnic minorities. Mr. Chairman, the regime's use of ethnic cleansing policies against the minorities namely the Karen, Karenni, and Shan on its eastern border and the Rohingya on its western border, are well documented and qualify the regime to be held accountable for crimes against humanity. Ethnic cleansing, rape as an official tool of repression, heroin and HIV/AIDS as primary exports, and slave labor are only some of the crimes to mention under international law. Thou

sands upon thousands of civilians have died and continue to die in the course of this over-50-year old unacknowledged civil war."

TAKE ACTION

Join others in your community and write to President Bush. Urge him to support groups that give humanitarian assistance to the IDPs in the jungles of Burma.

**President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500**

RELIGIOUS PRISONER ALERT



Indonesian Church leader Rev. Rinaldy Damanik was sentenced in June to three years for weapons possession after what many believe to have been a politically-motivated trial. On August 7, the Palu High court rejected Reverend Damanik's appeal. He is now appealing to the Supreme Court in Jakarta.

Rev. Damanik has been an outspoken critic of the police and other government authorities' lack of commitment to stop the violence in the region. In his capacity as the head of the Crisis Centre of Central Sulawesi, he was responsible for informing the international community of the attacks and human rights violations against the Christians in the region.

His arrest and trial has been plagued with human rights violations. Many of the testimonies from the police and military witnesses were contradictory and eyewitnesses admitted to being intimidated and abused. Here is how you can contact Rev. Damanik:

Prison: Pdt. R. Damanik
M.Si. c/o Rumah Tahanan
Maesa Palu
Jl. Bali No. 1, Palu
Sulawesi Tengah
Indonesia

**C/o the SSG Crisis
Centre:**

Rev. Damanik c/o Crisis Centre
P.O. Box 1406
Manado 95111 SULUT,
Indonesia

SOURCE: Jubilee Campaign, <http://www.jubileecampaign.org>

PRESIDENT CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

My previous newsletter focused on the issue of trafficking in persons, a growing form of slavery and profitability for criminal organizations around the world. In President Bush's recent speech at the United Nations General Assembly, he devoted a significant amount of time to discussing the importance of all nations working together to help stop this terrible crime. The relevant portion of his speech is below:

"There's another humanitarian crisis spreading, yet hidden from view. Each year, an estimated 800,000 to 900,000 human beings are bought, sold or forced across the world's borders. Among them are hundreds of thousands of teenage girls, and others as young as five, who fall victim to the sex trade. This commerce in human life generates billions of dollars each year — much of which is used to finance organized crime.

"There's a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable. The victims of sex trade see little of life before they see the very worst of life — an underground of brutality and lonely fear. Those who



create these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished. Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others. And governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery.

"This problem has appeared in my own country, and we are working to stop it. The PROTECT Act, which I signed into law this year, makes it a crime for any person to enter the United States, or for any citizen to travel abroad, for the purpose of sex tourism involving children. The Department of Justice is actively investigating sex tour operators and patrons, who can face up to 30 years in prison. Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the United States is using sanctions against governments to discourage human trafficking.

"The victims of this industry also need help from members of the United Nations.

And this begins with clear standards and the certainty of punishment under laws of every country. Today, some nations make it a crime to sexually abuse children abroad. Such conduct should be a crime in all nations. Governments should inform travelers of the harm this industry does, and the severe punishments that will fall on its patrons. The American government is committing \$50 million to support the good work of organizations that are rescuing women and children from exploitation, and giving them shelter and medical treatment and the hope of a new life. I urge other governments to do their part.

"We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time."

**Sign up for human rights
updates at:**

**[http://www.house.gov/pitts/
correspond.htm](http://www.house.gov/pitts/correspond.htm)**